

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-08 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00
LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGRE-00 L-03 ITC-01 /066 W
-----190051Z 124969 /73

R 181614Z APR 77
FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3544
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
USDEL MTN GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EGEN, EEC
SUBJECT: FRENCH LABELLING LAW

REF: (A) PARIS 5711, (B) STATE 81733, (C) EC BRUSSELS 528

1. ACCORDING TO COMMISSION OFFICIALS, MANY INDUSTRIALISTS AND SOME MEMBER STATES HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER FRENCH LABELLING LAW, BUT NO OFFICIAL COMPLAINT HAS BEEN REGISTERED FROM MEMBER STATES. DANISH PERMREP SOURCE HAS TOLD THE MISSION THAT THE DANISH FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIES APPROACHED THE COMMISSION LAST FALL TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE FRENCH LABELLING LAW BUT THE DANISH GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL COMPLAINT (REF. B).

2. DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INDUSTRIAL AND INTERNAL MARKET AFFAIRS, FERNAND BRAUN, HAS SENT LETTER TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT EXPRESSING COMMISSION CONCERN THAT THE LAW MIGHT BECOME A BARRIER TO INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE (REF. C). AS A RESULT OF THIS LETTER, GOF OFFICIAL MADE VISIT TO BRUSSELS RECENTLY TO ASSURE COMMISSION OFFICIALS THAT LAW WOULD NOT DISTORT TRADE. FRENCH REPORTEDLY TOLD
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COMMISSION THAT APPLICATION OF THE LAW WOULD BE DIRECTED TO CONSUMER LEVEL, AND NOT WHOLESALER, IMPORTER, DISTRIBUTOR OR TRANSACTIONS WITH SUBSIDIARIES, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REASONABLE IN INTERPRETING CONSUMER PROTECTION, E.G., SWITCHES COULD BE MARKED IN LANGUAGE OTHER THAN FRENCH AS LONG AS INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING SWITCHES WERE CLEARLY MARKED AND IN FRENCH.

3. COMMISSION OFFICIALS SEEM SATISFIED WITH FRENCH
EXPLANATIONS, BUT THEY HAVE TOLD CONCERNED BUSINESSMEN
THAT THEY WILL PURSUE VIGOROUSLY ANY SPECIFIC CASES OF
TRADE DISTORTION BROUGHT TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION.
JOHNSTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LAW, LABELING, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ECBRU03814
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770134-0906
Format: TEL
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770448/aaaabpfa.tel
Line Count: 68
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 767b3aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PARIS 5711, 77 STATE 81733, 77 EC BRUSSELS 528
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2778647
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH LABELLING LAW
TAGS: ETRD, EGEN, FR, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/767b3aa3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009